

Policy and Procedure for the Transmittal of Confidential Communication by Alternate Means

45 CFR 164.522(b)(2)

PURPOSE: To establish the policy and procedure for allowing patients to request the transmission to them of protected health information (PHI) by alternate means or to an alternate location.

POLICY: An individual has the right to request the transmission of protected health information (PHI) by alternate means or to an alternate location if the individual makes a written request and the request is reasonable.

DEFINITIONS:

Confidential communications means transmissions of a patient's PHI from the HIS.

Alternate means are methods of sending confidential communications that are different from the usual methods (e.g., e-mail, registered mail, etc.).

Alternate location means an address different from that listed as the mailing address. For example, the patient can ask that we contact him at work instead of at home or vice versa.

PROCEDURES: The following procedures will be used when patients request transmission of PHI by alternate means or to an alternate location.

1. All requests for confidential communications to be sent by alternate means or to an alternate location shall be in writing, contain the requested form of alternate means/location and shall be addressed to the Patient Registration office or other appropriate department. A basis for the request is not required.
2. The Chief Executive Officer/Service Unit Director (SUD/CEO) or designee will approve or disapprove all requests.¹ Whenever possible, the decision will be given to the patient prior to the patient leaving the facility. May only disapprove if request is not reasonable.
3. If applicable, when an alternate means would affect third party payment, the individual must specify how payment will be handled.
4. Requests will be filed in the health record after the patient has been notified of the decision of approval or disapproval.

¹ For Areas that provide CHS directly through the Area Office, references to the SUD/CEO should be considered references to the Area Director's designee, as applicable.